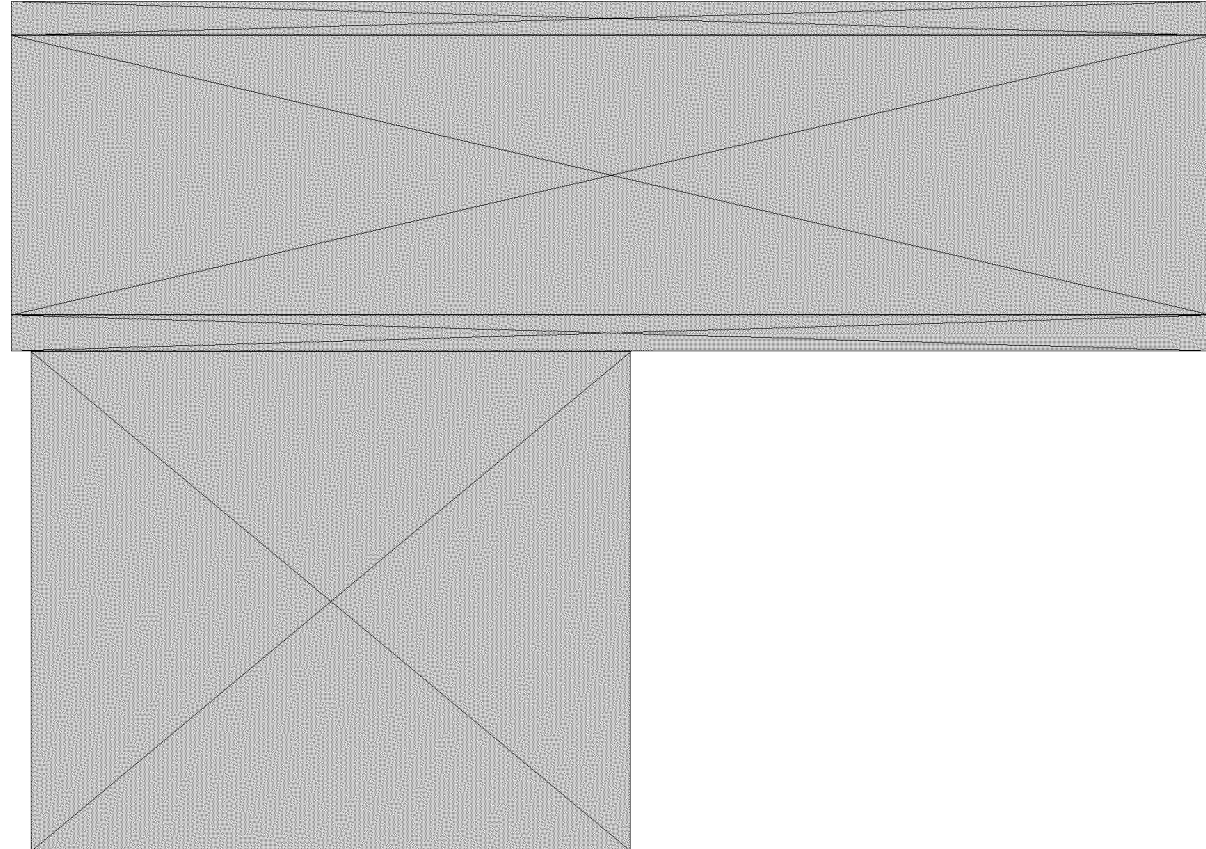


**To:** Szaro, Deb[Szaro.Deb@epa.gov]  
**From:** EnergyGuardian  
**Sent:** Mon 10/19/2015 9:20:38 PM  
**Subject:** White House: Paris deal needs to 'ratchet up' commitments over time

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Energy and environment headlines for the afternoon of Monday, October 19, 2015



## White House: Paris deal needs to 'ratchet up' commitments over time

By Kevin Rogers

The Obama administration on Monday launched a full-court press for an international climate deal, as top administration officials said the United Nations-sponsored talks needed to reach an agreement that strengthens nations' pollution-cutting commitments over time.

At a White House climate summit, officials also announced commitments from major corporations to support a strong deal emerging from negotiations scheduled for December in Paris.

Paris, and to cut their own emissions as well.

State Department Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern, while upbeat about the prospects of a Paris agreement, said that countries have not made commitments strong enough to adequately restrain the rise in global temperatures, so any agreement must have a mechanism for getting stricter over time.

"We have proposed and pushed the idea of successive rounds of targets, so you keep ratcheting ambition up. The first round of targets is hugely significant," he said. "They're very good, but they're not enough. What we need is a multi-part package for ambition, successive rounds of ratcheting up targets over time [and] long-term targets as well."

Stern, the top U.S. negotiator in Paris, cited Climate Action Tracker, a climate data group, which projects that the current national pledges would keep the rise in global temperatures to 2.7 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The goal of the UN talks is to limit that rise to 2 degrees, the point where many scientists believe the most severe impacts would become irreversible. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that the world could hit that point by 2050, absent strong action to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The U.S., for its part, has pledged to cut overall emissions to 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels, and to achieve that goal by 2025. The administration said it would do so through power plant carbon regulations, fuel efficiency standards, oil and gas methane emissions rules, and improved energy efficiency.

Private-sector support for a strong deal was announced in connection with a roundtable with business executives and President Barack Obama. Some 81 companies—including Apple, Berkshire Hathaway Energy, and Google—pledged to cut their carbon emissions and expand renewable energy investment.

"The perception is that this is an environmental issue, it's for tree huggers, and that hard-headed businesspeople either don't care about it or see it as a conflict with their bottom lines," Obama said. "This conversation has confirmed what we've known for quite some time, which is that considerations of climate change, energy efficiency, renewable energies are not only not contradictory to their bottom lines, but for these companies, they're discovering that they can enhance their bottom lines."

"We support the conclusion of a climate change agreement in Paris that takes a strong step forward toward a low-carbon, sustainable future," the companies pledged. "We recognize that delaying action on climate change will be costly in economic and human terms, while accelerating the transition to a low-carbon economy will produce multiple benefits with regard to sustainable economic growth, public health, resilience to natural disasters, and the health of the global environment."

The United Nations talks are the topic of a Tuesday Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee hearing, where Stern is slated to testify on the U.S. commitment.

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Chairman Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., has already pressed Stern on the administration's approach to the negotiations, including whether the agreement would be in the form of a treaty subject to Senate ratification. He contended that, since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol were submitted for congressional approval, any deal from Paris should be as well.

Many of Corker's colleagues, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., have vowed to find a legislative channel to block a climate deal or U.S. commitment.

Tom Pyle, president of the free market group American Energy Alliance, said the administration's decision on whether to pursue a treaty or some other form of agreement will be critical.

"The lead-up to this treaty is all backdrop and photo-ops from my perspective, especially if they're not going to submit it to the Senate," he said. "The next person that comes in can just basically undo it with the stroke of a pen. I'm not sure what they're going to ultimately achieve in terms of anything meaningful out of Paris."

But Stern and other White House officials were all optimism Monday, especially because, they say, India, Brazil and China have put substantial commitments on the table. Stern called it a "fundamental pivot" for global climate policy.

"We are uniquely positioned like we never have been as a global community, but we have a lot of work today," White House Senior Adviser Brian Deese said. "Taken together, we now have 150 countries that have submitted their official contributions to the U.N. process. That represents more than 85 percent of global emissions. That, in and of itself, reflects success."

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## **Tests underway after fire put out at radioactive waste site**

**By Sally Ho and Ken Ritter**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A contractor from the former nuclear weapons testing site in Nevada joined several state agencies checking air quality and monitoring for other problems Monday following a fire at a radioactive waste disposal site in rural southern Nevada.

No injuries were reported after the fire, which began Sunday afternoon in an industrial area near Beatty, Nevada, about 115 miles northwest of Las Vegas, said Bud Marshall, southern Nevada regional supervisor for the state Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

It was not clear how the fire started at the shuttered disposal site, which is about 8 miles from populated areas. Authorities say it closed in 1992 after accepting low-level radioactive waste for 30 years, which typically can include tools, protective clothing, and parts and machinery from nuclear plants.

**A fixed-wing aircraft and a helicopter from the former Nevada Test Site were flying**

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radiation detection equipment over and around the area, Nevada National Security Site spokesman Darwin Morgan said. The results were being turned over to state officials, he said.

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## **Upcoming nuke plant closure could roil New England energy markets**

**By Stephen Singer**

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — The impending retirement of Massachusetts' only nuclear power plant could roil energy markets across New England, leading to greater reliance on natural gas, driving up carbon emissions and putting more pressure on pipelines already facing bottlenecks.

Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, the only nuclear power plant in Massachusetts, announced last week it will close by June 2019 because it's becoming too expensive to run. Two other nuclear plants operate in New England, at Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire and Millstone Power Station in Connecticut.

"We're concerned about the apparent enthusiasm around the states for a leap to fill this void with natural gas plants," said Greg Cunningham, of the Conservation Law Foundation, an environmental advocacy group. "It's heading us in the wrong direction."

States have set low-carbon emissions caps in law and will have to find ways to meet those goals after Pilgrim goes dark. Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker said the shutdown of Pilgrim will be a "significant loss of carbon-free electricity generation" and will undermine the state's progress in achieving greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

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## **Lawsuits could force VW to buy back cheating diesels**

**By Tom Krisher**

DETROIT (AP) — Volkswagen almost inevitably will have to compensate owners of diesel cars equipped with emissions-rigging software. Some legal experts say the automaker could be forced to buy back the cars altogether.

Many of the more than 200 lawsuits filed in the past few weeks allege that for seven years VW marketed four-cylinder diesel Golfs, Jettas, Beetles and Passats as clean alternatives to

gas engines, knowing all along that the cars were spewing pollution that far exceeded legal limits.

In September, Volkswagen admitted to rigging emissions tests in the U.S. Earlier this month, Michael Horn, the head of its U.S. operations, told a congressional panel that VW was considering compensating owners for the lost value of their cars. He also said that it could take from one to two years to fix all the affected cars.

Seattle lawyer Steve Berman seized on that time frame when he sued VW last week in Los Angeles, seeking full restitution for owners of nearly 70,000 affected cars in California.

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## **Ohio River's huge algae bloom a warning for water suppliers**

**By John Seewer, The Associated Press**

A toxic algae outbreak that snaked more than 600 miles down the Ohio River past four states is forcing water utilities to reassess the threat from harmful algal blooms that are popping up increasingly around the nation.

Treatment plant operators and researchers along the river were surprised by the large bloom and said it should be a warning to cities that get their water supply from lakes, rivers and manmade reservoirs.

"You need to be ready and have a plan in place," said Roger Tucker, who monitors algae sampling for the Louisville Water Co. in Kentucky. "The Ohio River is proof of that."

The bloom appears to be winding down now, two months after being detected in the middle of August. It made its way from Wheeling, West Virginia, and past Cincinnati and Louisville, setting off warnings about boating and fishing in the river. Organizers canceled a swim from Cincinnati to northern Kentucky.

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## **Oil collapse gives US colleges a test on backpedaling donors**

**By Paul J. Weber**

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — It's easy to see what oil money means to the University of Texas. Tuition hasn't budged in three years because of gushing wells in the Permian Basin. More than a few buildings, including the football team headquarters, are named after wildcatters,

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and a pump jack stands outside the 100,000-seat stadium to commemorate the 1920s oil boom.

But the latest bust and tumbling crude prices are now pinching off the largesse that helps this university and others in oil-rich states afford what they want when state budgets are straitened, which is especially the case now. Already, the consequences are becoming obvious.

Campus construction projects are being stretched out or put in limbo, scholarship funds are taking a hit and across the Southwest, donors are asking for more time to make good on big pledges.

"When the price of oil was \$100 a barrel we had a lot more gifts. They had the ability to make more gifts," said Bob Walker, who raised hundreds of millions of dollars for Texas A&M University for three decades before retiring last year.

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## **A message from the American Petroleum Institute**

**America is now the world's #1 natural gas producer and will soon be #1 in oil. Now more than ever, abundant energy means abundant prosperity, opportunity and security for all Americans.**

[Learn more at EnergyTomorrow.org](http://EnergyTomorrow.org)

## **Pope rallies bishops to press climate call before Paris meet**

**By The Associated Press**

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican is seeking to reinforce Pope Francis' environmental message by encouraging bishops from around the world to sign an appeal to world leaders meeting in Paris next month for crucial climate change talks.

Cardinals, patriarchs and bishops, including representatives of regional bishops' conferences from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, are expected to sign the appeal Monday.

Francis outlined his eco-message in a major teaching document in June, denouncing what he called the "structurally perverse" fossil fuel-based world economy that he says exploits the poor and destroys the earth.

The encyclical was cheered by environmentalists and ignored or criticized by big business interests. In the U.S., it was met with particular unease and so far no U.S. bishop is scheduled to participate in the conference to launch the appeal.

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## **Czech Republic to expand brown coal mining program**

**By The Associated Press**

PRAGUE (AP) — The Czech government has approved a plan to expand the mining of lignite, a fossil fuel known as brown coal.

Despite protests from environmentalists and local citizens, the government is allowing the mining to expand beyond previously set limits to get access to up to 120 million metric tons of coal in the northwest of the country.

The limits were set in 1991 to prevent environmental damage as brown coal is a major source of greenhouse gases.

Trade and Industry Minister Jan Mladek says the coal is needed to secure the country's energy supply.

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## **Global Witness: How 4 African countries lost \$4 billion**

**By The Associated Press**

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — A watchdog group says four African countries lost more than \$4 billion in shady oil and mining deals and calls for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to police the hidden ownership of companies used for such corruption.

Global Witness details contracts in Nigeria, Angola, Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo and "lays bare how anonymous companies facilitate the loss of national wealth on an epic scale."

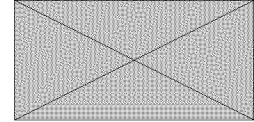
The report questions the role of international oil companies that facilitate such deals.

Global Witness says the transparency group faces "a credibility test" when its board meets in Switzerland this week to decide whether to make disclosure of true owners a membership condition.

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## **Week in Review – Carbon Dioxide Study Shows Benefits**

Kasich Announces Energy Plan.

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### **Supreme Court to hear another electricity case**

Days after the Supreme Court heard arguments over the demand response rule, the high court agreed to take on another electricity case exploring the boundary between the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's powers and those of the states, E&E reports.

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### **Ex-BLM heads push for tougher methane rules**

Stricter rules regulating methane generated by oil and gas operations on federal lands would help curb emissions and provide more revenue to Native American tribes, former Bureau of Land Management chiefs Bob Abbey and Mike Dombeck wrote in a letter to the White House, The Hill reports.

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### **Oil slumps on China data, gasoline slide**

A significant drop in gasoline futures alongside data showing a continued slowdown in Chinese economic growth sent oil prices tumbling again Monday. West Texas Intermediate crude for November delivery fell \$1.37 to settle at \$45.89 a barrel on the Nymex, while in London, December Brent lost \$1.85, or 3.7 percent, to \$48.61, MarketWatch reports.

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### **Borrowing bite for oil companies may come next year**

Oil companies seem to have escaped massive cuts in their credit lines this autumn, but banks' reassessment of their borrowing bases may be much tougher in the spring, FuelFix reports.

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### **Halliburton swings to a 3Q loss, cuts more jobs**

Halliburton reported a \$54 million loss in the third quarter, despite cutting 4,000 jobs, so it will consider more cuts if the market doesn't pick up, FuelFix reports.

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## **Americans plowing gasoline savings back into gasoline products; Study**

A JPMorgan Chase study found that Americans saved around \$41 a month last winter when gasoline prices fell, but ended up using almost half of that to buy more gas and higher octane fuel—a phenomenon researchers call “mental accounting,” The New York Times reports.

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## **Trump would cut EPA funding**

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump told Fox News Sunday that he’d reduce funding for the Environmental Protection Agency, whose regulations he called a “disgrace,” Bloomberg reports.

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## **“Fire Obama” signs to cost Murray Energy \$5,000**

Back in 2012 Murray Energy didn’t include a disclosure notice showing it paid for signs it handed to employees, which read “STOP the WAR on COAL—FIRE OBAMA,” and the company has now agreed to pay the Federal Election Commission a \$5,000 penalty as a result, the Plain Dealer reports.

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## **Harper loss could mean more Canadian moves to fight climate change**

If Canadians voting Monday bring the Liberal Party and its leader Justin Trudeau into government, analysts expect more effort to develop clean energy and fight climate change, and less of a focus on oil drilling, E&E reports.

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## **Say ‘no’ to Suncor takeover, Canadian Oil Sands board urges**

The hostile takeover offer from Suncor Energy—at \$4.5 billion Canadian given the current share price—substantially undervalues Canadian Oil Sands, the company board has told shareholders, CBC news reports.

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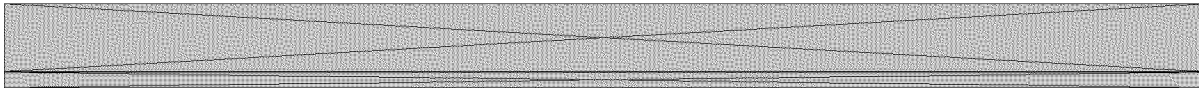
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## **Upcoming Events**

- Oct. 19, Washington: Vice President Joe Biden, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and

White House Senior Adviser Brian Deese to speak at a White House summit on the path forward for United Nations climate talks. 12:30 pm , The White House.

- Oct. 20, Washington: The Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy to hold a hearing on December's United Nations climate talks. State Department Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern to testify. 2:45 pm , Dirksen 419.
- Oct. 20, Washington: The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to hold a hearing on six Interior Department and Energy Department nominees, including Cherry Ann Murray, to be Director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy; Victoria Marie Baecher Wassmer, to be Under Secretary of Energy; Mary Kendall, to be Inspector General at the Department of the Interior; Suzette Kimball, to be Director of the United States Geological Survey; Kristen Joan Sarri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior (Policy, Management and Budget) ; and John Frances Kotek, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Nuclear Energy). 10:00 am , Dirksen 366.
- Oct. 20, Washington: Secretary of State John Kerry to headline a State Department forum on climate and clean energy investment forum. 9:15 am , State Department.



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